



**Connecticut Department of Public Health**

**Testimony Presented Before the Public Health Committee**

**March 4, 2015**

**Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA  
860-509-7101**

**House Bill #6270: An Act Concerning Home Bakeries**

The Department of Public Health (DPH) is opposed to House Bill 6270.

House Bill 6270 removes the term “home bakery” from the definition of a bakery in Section 21a-151 of the General Statutes, and mandates the Departments of Public Health and Consumer Protection to adopt new regulations regarding the preparation of food in a private residential dwelling that will be sold for human consumption.

On a national level, there has been an increase in “cottage-type” food production businesses in an effort to provide economic stimulus and create jobs. When these types of businesses are run by individuals who potentially have no food production background or food safety education, and/or who have inadequate food processing equipment, it diminishes the efforts of federal, state, and local regulatory agencies tasked with ensuring the food supply is safe for human consumption. Food sold by individuals without the appropriate food safety education from businesses that do not have appropriate protocols in place will increase the risk for foodborne illness, and may increase the number of consumer complaints. Some agents that cause foodborne illnesses, such as norovirus, can survive on any type of food product - even simple baked goods such as cookies or cakes. An increase in reported foodborne illness would require resources from the DPH Food Protection Program, DPH Epidemiology Program, as well as the CT State Public Health Laboratory. Further, this bill has the potential to undermine the sustainability of small local food businesses that have worked diligently to develop and grow a business that produces food under a regulatory framework.

The bill calls for the adoption of regulations for ‘home bakeries,’ but does not make mention of current regulations regarding bakeries regulated by the Department of Consumer Protection and some local health departments. If it is intended that home bakeries be exempt from regulation, it would further weaken the definition of ‘approved source,’ as food would be produced without the benefit of a regulatory inspection program. Home-based bakeries that are serviced by well water and/or on-site septic systems would require evaluation for appropriate use by the local health department with jurisdiction over the residential property. Fats, oils and grease typically associated with the preparation of baked goods have the potential to cause septic system failure and groundwater contamination. These failures could have a significant financial impact on a home-based business owner.

Federal, state and local food protection programs have advanced significantly in the past few decades and have reduced the incidence of foodborne illness. House Bill 6270 has the potential to weaken those efforts and puts the general public at greater risk.

***Phone: (860) 509-7269, Fax: (860) 509-7100, Telephone Device for the Deaf (860) 509-7191  
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # 13GRE, P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134  
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General information regarding foodborne illness can be found on the Centers for Disease Control's website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/foodborneburden/estimates-overview.html>.

Specific information regarding CT food borne illness and outbreaks can be found on the Department of Public Health's website at: [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/infectious\\_diseases/ctepinews/vol33no3.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/infectious_diseases/ctepinews/vol33no3.pdf)

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.